

## **Welcome to the JME Special Issue on Service-Learning**

### **No More Reinventing the Service-Learning Wheel: Presenting A Diverse Compilation of Best Practice “How To” Articles**

This *Journal of Management Education* special issue has been a long time coming. There is no doubt that the teaching tool commonly referred to as service-learning – the practice of engaging students in real-world reciprocally-based active and reflective experiences via programs and projects with service-oriented organizations in their local communities - has grown in prominence and application, nationally and internationally, over the past decade. As Thomas Ehrlich aptly stated in a 2009 commentary, “Service-learning is now a major national movement at every educational level, and is a particularly powerful force in undergraduate education. Connecting academic study with community service through structured reflection is widely recognized as contributing to learning that is deeper, longer-lasting, and more portable to new situations and circumstances” (Ehrlich, 2009, p.1).

The growth of this practice is exemplified in a number of ways. In 2006, we saw the first round of the Carnegie Foundation’s Community Engagement Classification Scheme, which includes a clearly defined service-learning component called “curricular engagement,” and now represents classifications for 119 colleges and universities throughout the U.S. Also, as of 2007, Campus Compact (an organization representing over 1,100 U.S.-based colleges and universities) reported that 72% of their responding member colleges and universities had discipline-based service-learning courses as part of their engagement portfolio. Finally, in 2008 and early 2009, we witnessed Barak Obama’s presidential campaign platform and early term agenda with an unwavering focus on increasing U.S. national service programs, including those that are educationally-based and commonly referred to as service-learning.

In terms of the management education literature, to date there have been a number of special issues on service-learning, each filling an important need and directed at a targeted audience. That said, what none of these issues has done, and yet what we know is a pressing need for management educators, is to present a diverse set of “how to” templates for practitioners interested in either engaging in service-learning for the first time or refining and expanding their current work in this domain. The goal of this special issue is to fill that void – to showcase a detailed set of “how to” articles that are not only representative of the wide range of courses found throughout management education but also written with the aim of sharing logistical and operational best practice.

As a precursor to our brief overview of each of the articles included in this special issue, we would like to thank the authors and reviewers of all of the manuscripts that were submitted. We had a very positive response to the call for papers, resulting in a large number of manuscripts, with descriptions of innovative programs and projects embedded in courses ranging across the entire management education disciplinary spectrum. The authors of each of these papers are doing exceptional work and we would like to applaud

them for their commitment to the development of service-learning, community engagement, and student learning. We are also indebted to our tireless reviewers. For each of the manuscripts that was sent out for review, we had three reviewers – two representing the service-learning domain and one representing more traditional management education from *JME*'s talented reviewer pool. Once again, without people who are creating, refining, and sharing their experiences as best practice service-learning practitioners, and those who work to assist in the development of the scholarship in this area, we would not have the resultant high quality and informative articles that we are so proud to share with you in this special issue. Kudos to everyone involved.

In terms of the articles that are included in this special issue, they represent a diverse array of educational levels, disciplinary domains, and project types. Our intention is that there will be “something for everyone” in this issue – be it a practice, format, reflective approach, underlying theoretical foundation, hand-out, component of a syllabus, or other, we hope that readers will find at least one practical, conceptual, and/or theoretical gem in each article they read.

In terms of article ordering, we have chosen to tell a “developmental story” with the sequence of articles in this issue. We follow the path of student development in tertiary education, starting with undergraduate introductory courses and finishing with advanced executive-level courses. To start our story, at the undergraduate introductory level, we include articles describing two courses in different disciplinary domains, one in Management (Flannery and Pragman) and one in Entrepreneurship (McCrea). We then share articles focused on an undergraduate advanced elective in Negotiation (Kenworthy) and a Business Strategy capstone course (Robinson et al.), followed by a model Leadership/Project Management/Teams two-course sequence (Fairfield), a postgraduate Entrepreneurship and Community Leadership course (Litzky et al.) and, finally, an executive course on Leadership and Change Management (Rhee and Sigler).

We believe that the authors collectively tell their own story – one of exploration, struggle, learning, and growth both for themselves and their students. The richness of their collective story is embedded in the historical maturation of service-learning; as a teaching tool, service-learning has been extensively used in the management discipline for over a decade. As such, each of the papers in this issue reflects developmental insight from not only the authors who are included, but also their colleagues, mentors, students, and community partners. It is important to remember that many of these articles showcase projects that have been adapted and refined through multiple iterations over numerous years across a variety of institutional applications. To assist readers with an overview of the articles, we briefly describe the focus of each paper below.

The special issue begins with Flannery and Pragman's article “Service-Learning and Integrated Course Design.” They use systems theory and Fink's (2003) integrated design approach to restructure an undergraduate principles of management course to include a semester long service-learning project at a local Campus Kitchen. The authors step readers through factors that spurred their decisions to change the course and adopt service-learning as a major pedagogical tool. Further, they explain the nuances of the

class activities used to support the project. Finally, as is the hallmark of most of the articles in this issue, the authors provide a powerful reflection on what they learned, what worked, what did not work, and why. While this paper is impressive on several levels, we believe that readers who rely on frameworks in their decision-making processes will find particular value in Flannery and Pragman's insights.

Next is McCrea's story about "Integrating Service-Learning into an Introduction to Entrepreneurship Course." McCrea dispels the myth that service-learning, especially in a non-profit setting, is incompatible with entrepreneurship pedagogy. She compellingly demonstrates how service-learning can be an extremely effective tool for teaching a number of critical objectives in this highly specialized curriculum. While we know that entrepreneurship faculty will find great value in this paper, we are also convinced that many of McCrea's points will leave a lasting impact on those seeking to design their own service-learning courses with similar learning objectives.

Third is Kenworthy's article, which describes a semester-long service-learning consulting project in an advanced elective undergraduate course. Kenworthy's students engage in intra-team as well as inter-organizational negotiations as they are tasked with the challenge of identifying a community organization that has a current and unfilled need. For those who teach negotiation, Kenworthy ties a number of core concepts (e.g., BATNA) to the project's structure and the students' learning; for those who do not teach negotiation, Kenworthy effectively describes a "how to" approach for semester long service projects. Her project format is one of the most "mature" we offer in this special issue, in that its design is the result of over nine years of continuous adaptation and refinement. As a final note related to this article, we would like to thank Gina Vega for acting as Associate Editor (AE) for this submission. With Kenworthy serving as a guest editor for the special issue, to ensure anonymity as well as a fair and blind review process, this paper was submitted through the normal *JME* review pipeline with Gina Vega as the AE and four additional reviewers who blind reviewed this paper.

Robinson, Sherwood, and DePaolo next demonstrate "Service Learning by Doing: How a Student-Run Consulting Company Finds Relevance and Purpose in a Business Strategy Capstone Course"—a class typically dominated pedagogically by cases and integrative computer simulations. The authors tackle head on the lament of many strategy teachers that students' lack of professional work experience makes the course's concepts too sterile and abstract. They share in remarkable detail how they designed and delivered a class that incorporates both service- and problem-based learning using student-run consulting groups to bring strategy topics to life. While we applaud the course's approach for livening up the strategy classroom through service-learning, we think this paper will find an even wider audience in its clear description of how Robinson, Sherwood, and DePaolo are able to teach students to set up and successfully run their own consulting teams.

Fairfield's "Growing Up and Growing Out" takes a slightly different approach from other articles in this issue. Outwardly, it is a detailed story of how the author integrates service-learning first into an undergraduate organizational theory class, and then how this

experience led to the design of a new service-learning course entitled “Managing Self and Others.” But, to focus on just on the mechanics of designing and delivering two service-learning courses (as well described as they are) is to miss the even deeper value of the article. At its core, it is an intensely personal story of Fairfield’s decision to adopt service-learning, his successes, failures, and more importantly the lessons he is learning in his continuing journey with the pedagogy. We firmly believe that all *JME* readers involved with, or considering adopting, service-learning will find valuable personal insights and lessons in this article.

Litzky, Godshalk, and Walton-Bongers’ “Social Entrepreneurship and Community Leadership: A Service Learning Model for Management Education” is the first of two in this special issue that focuses on service-learning at the graduate level. Their paper is a story of how they use service-learning in the required capstone course in their university’s Masters of Leadership Development program. The authors make a strong case that social entrepreneurship is a unique type of entrepreneurship and how service-learning within this context is an ideal tool for helping students develop as transformational leaders. The vehicle for their manuscript is the process by which they connect graduate students as mentors of local high school students to serve local social entrepreneurial organizations. As with all of the articles in this “how to” issue, Litzky, Godshalk, and Walton-Bongers’ work is full of practical advice on how to get service-learning up and running in a graduate level context. Even more importantly, we note a remarkable focus on how their activity helps students to achieve greater self-awareness and personal growth—one of the core tenants of both service-learning and this journal. We are sure their insights will find a wide audience within the *JME* readership. The special issue concludes all too quickly with Rhee and Sigler’s article “Developing Enlightened Leaders for Industry and Community.” Their article focuses on using service-learning in an integral course in their university’s “Master of Science in Executive Leadership and Organization Change” (ELOC) program. The paper would be successful even if it just narrowly focused on the detailed description of how the authors developed their public engagement practicum course—it contains ample guidance and insights for teachers considering using service-learning to help develop executive students. However, the article is even more notable in its exploration of how and why service-learning was used as a tool to connect to and reinforce the larger learning goals of the entire ELOC program. Here, Rhee and Sigler demonstrate the benefits of using multiple complementary pedagogical approaches to develop an entire curriculum. We are sure that their macro view of service-learning will spur many inspiring ideas for those involved in designing both individual courses and entire programs.

As a final note, we would like to share a number of themes we found common throughout the articles: (1) a focus on the power and potential of experiential education through community engagement and real-world, real-time problem-solving; (2) the belief that effective community partnering is attained through symbiotic and reciprocally-based relationships; and (3) a deeply humble approach to project design acknowledging the fact that “one shoe will never fit everyone” and the resultant challenges of real-world projects are clearly and dramatically offset by the high levels of our students’ engagement and learning – continuous learning and improvement is a deeply ingrained part of the learning

process. Having shared the themes we found and our overview of the issue, we look forward to your reflections on the themes and the learning you take away from these articles. It is with genuine enthusiasm for, and unbridled anticipation of, your reactions, reflections, insights, adaptations and extensions of the work described in this special issue that we now turn these pages over to you.

We would like our last words to be a “thank you” to Jane Schmidt-Wilk, Editor of the *Journal of Management Education*, for both her unwavering support of this special issue and her ability to effectively balance the leadership challenge of guiding us through this process while providing us with a high level of discretion and autonomy.

Yours in learning,

– Amy Kenworthy & Charles Fornaciari

References:

Campus Compact’s 2007 Service Statistics: Highlights and Trends of Campus Compact’s Annual Membership Survey (p.6), accessed on March 31, 2009, and available at: [http://www.compact.org/wp-content/uploads/about/statistics/2007/service\\_statistics.pdf](http://www.compact.org/wp-content/uploads/about/statistics/2007/service_statistics.pdf).

Ehrlich, T. 2009. “Service-learning in undergraduate education: Where is it going?” The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching website, Perspectives Archives section, accessed on March 31, 2009 and available at: <http://www.carnegiefoundation.org/perspectives/sub.asp?key=245&subkey=1251>

Fink, L. D. 2003. *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*. San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons.